THE CHARACTERS OF THE *WIDOWS*, AND *Old Women* in GENERAL, VINDICATED;

Being a proper ANSWER to a malicious and ſcurrillous Pamphlet, intituled, *The Folly, Sin, and Danger of marrying Widows, and Old Women in General.*

By a LADY.

Slander, the worſt of Poiſons, ever finds,
An eaſy Entrance in ignoble Minds.

HARVIE's Juvenal.

On Eagle's Wings immortal Scandals fly,
While virtuous Actions are but born and die.

Ibid.

LONDON:
Printed for J. OLDCASTLE, near St. *Paul's.*

TO THE Wonderful AUTHOR OF THE FOLLY, SIN, and DANGER OF Marrying *Old Women*, &c.

Mr. GALLIPOT,

NO ſooner did I ſee your pamphlet advertiſed than, induced by the ſingularity of the title, I ſent for it. Upon turning over two or three of the firſt pages, I began to ſuſpect, from the laborious ſtiffneſs, and aukward formality of the ſtile and diction, that the author was ſome diſappointed attorney's clerk, whoſe neceſſities having prompted him to turn fortune-hunter, and having

failed in his attempts on the purſe and effects of ſome wealthy Widow, or elderly Maid, who had prudence enough to treat him with that contempt which he and his project deſerved, had maliciouſly taken this method of revenging himſelf, not only on the particular object of his reſentment, but on the whole claſs of Widows, and in general, all Women advanced in Years.

However, when I had read a little further, my conjecture varied, and I concluded that the author muſt certainly be ſome woful country curate, equally neceſſitous with the attorney's clerk, and induced to publiſh ſuch a medley of preachment and lampoon, from the ſame unchriſtian ſpirit of private reſentment; but when I came to your worſhip's perſonal hiſtory, bleſs me! how was I ſurprized to find my lawyer and parſon transformed into an apothecary, and the peſtle and mortar into a pen and a ſtandiſh.

In the name of goodneſs, Mr. *Gulliver*, who put it into that ſtrange head of yours to ſet up for an author, and how came you to think yourſelf qualified for writing to the publick? — Indeed I am afraid ſome unlucky wag, acquainted with your weak ſide, has impoſed on and brought you into this ſcrape, by making you believe that you

you were really maſter of ſenſe, wit, knowledge of the world, and plain engliſh, *quantum ſufficit*, to appear in print: but how the dickens came you, or your prompter, to think of ſuch an out of the way and critical ſubject?——If you needs muſt ſcribble, could you find nothing in character to diſplay your profound talents upon? *A diſſertation on gliſter-pipes. A critical enquiry into the original invention of the urinal:* or, *an eſſay on the tranſcendant virtues of iſſue-peas*; theſe would have been ſubjects worthy the greatneſs of your genius and erudition; ſubjects, in which the opportunities of your profeſſion may probably have furniſhed you with ſuch a fund of knowledge and experience, as might have enabled you to make a learned figure in the republick of letters; ſubjects which, in the title-page, might have made ſuch an appearance, as would doubtleſs, at firſt ſight, have done honour to the author, and have greatly prepoſſeſſed every reader in favour of the reſt of the book.——But, inſtead of employing his pen on ſuch ſuitable topicks, for an apothecary to pretend to correct and regulate the laws of *Hymen*, and to reform the notions and practice of all mankind, with regard to the important article of matrimony, is ſuch a

monſtrous inſtance of arrogance, ignorance, and folly in a ſingle perſon, as even this age of impudence and wickedneſs has not yet parallell'd.

After all, (to be ſerious) it is pretty evident, that a mean and unmanly ſpirit of revenge, induced you to write and publiſh ſuch a nonſenſical and ſcandalous pamphlet, as *the folly, ſin, and danger of marrying Widows, Old Women*, &c. A pamphlet which has produced no other effect with its readers, than to convince every one of ſenſe, of the folly and wickedneſs of the author, and of the danger to which he has made himſelf liable by writing it.*

In your title-page, you call yourſelf a *true penitent*, by which I ſuppoſe you mean, that you are ſorry for the folly and ſin you were guilty of, in marrying a rich old Widow, when you were pre-engaged to

* *To wit.* The danger of loſing his reputation and buſineſs, of being kicked out of every genteel and ſober company, and of being ſhut out of all ſociety with the better part of mankind, ſhould he be publickly known as the author of ſo invidious a work; for, doubtleſs every good and ſenſible man, and all women in general, will abhor and deſpiſe ſuch a wretch, and take all opportunities of making him feel the effects of their generous reſentment of the injury he has done or intended againſt ſo many thouſands of innocent defenceleſs women.

to a young girl without riches: a very ſurprizing inſtance of contrition indeed! but hearkye, Mr. *Penitent*, is it conſiſtent with that humble ſincerity, and rectitude of heart which conſtitutes the true ſpirit of repentance, to defame, abuſe, and blacken the characters not only of any one perſon, but of many thouſands? — Of thouſands and ten thouſands who never did nor poſſibly could do you the leaſt injury! or if you had thought yourſelf ever ſo reaſonably provoked and ſtirred up to reſentment, yet, as a *true penitent*, you ought not to have any ways indulged or gratified that reſentment, but rather to have ſtifled and ſubdued it: for if you practiſe not chriſtian charity, and forgiveneſs of injuries yourſelf, how can you be ſo abſurdly impudent as to ſet up for a true penitent, or to expect the forgiveneſs of heaven, in conſequence of your ſham repentance.— But, perhaps I am miſconſtruing your meaning, and that by calling yourſelf a true penitent, you would have us underſtand that your are only ſuch for the ſins of the Widows and Old Women in general, or of your late ſpouſe in particular; that having taken all their or her crimes upon yourſelf, you have repented of them as a good chriſtian ſhould; and that 'tis in this

light

light only we are to look on you as a true penitent.

Why really, Mr. *Gallipot*, if this be the caſe, and for ought that I certainly know, or your book gives me to underſtand, it may poſſibly be ſo; I ſay, if this be the caſe, I aſk your pardon, and have nothing further to object on this head: nay, I will further acknowledge, that, notwithſtanding you have given us ſo little inſight into this matter, I am very willing to believe this the real light in which you conſider yourſelf as a *true penitent*: for, that you ſhould think yourſelf capable of becoming a voluntary proxy for the wickedneſs and the repentance of other people, and that the rules of generoſity and charity oblige you to do ſo, is not in the leaſt inconſiſtent with thoſe appearances of your wiſdom, ſo obvious to every one who reads your pamphlet.

But, let us leave this obſcure point to the diſquiſitions of thoſe who have more leiſure and greater abilities than you and I, Mr. *Gallipot*: tho', by the way, I do not think it of much importance to any one, to know why and wherein you are a *true penitent*. But, I muſt again remark, that whether you had any deſign in thus ſtiling yourſelf, or whether you were really guiltleſs

leſs of any meaning at all, which ſome people are apt to ſuſpect, yet having dreſs'd yourſelf in the habit of a ſaint, you ſhould have had a little more regard to decency, than to play the devil ſo groſly on your very firſt appearance.

You tell us that you had a wife, who, whilſt living, merited your averſion. But is this an eligible reaſon for expoſing both her and yourſelf to all the world after her death? and, which is ſtill more inexcuſable, not content with taking an unmanly revenge on her name and memory, for injuring, as far as lay in your power, the reputation of every other woman, who has had the misfortune of loſing her huſband, or has outlived the days of her youth?—— "Oh! but," ſays you, "'Tis ſocial love, "or a tender regard for the happineſs of "my fellow-creatures, and a laudable am-"bition of doing good, that ſolely in-"duceth me to publiſh my book.*"—— A very pretty declaration indeed, and well worthy Mr. *Gallipot*.—— Oh! indignant reader! haſt thou ever before met with ſuch an inſtance of ſtupid hypocricy? I will only put Mr. *Gallipot*'s meaning into plain *engliſh*, and then, if he has any ſenſe of modeſty, he muſt be aſhamed of himſelf.

* See page 1 of the *folly of marrying Widows*, &c.

ſelf. *Viz.* "A tender regard for the happi-
" neſs of my fellow-creatures, and a lau-
" dable ambition of doing good, has
" prompted me to ſcandalize, and vilify,
" and do all in my power to injure the
" perſons, and deſtroy the characters of
" all the Widows, both young and old,
" and all other Old Women whatever,
" that are now in the world, and are yet
" unborn; in order, as I *modeſtly* con-
" ceive, to prevent here and there a ſoli-
" tary fellow from running the hazard of
" creating himſelf ſome uneaſineſs by
" marrying with ſuch women. Tho' at
" the ſame time I am not inſenſible that
" the miſchief I may do, bears no pro-
" portion to the good which I propoſe,
" ſeeing I have indiſcriminately attacked
" all women of the above denominations,
" who are doubtleſs a prodigious multi-
" tude: perhaps in *Great Britain* and
" *Ireland* only, they may amount to about
" two millions, out of which number not
" above fifty thouſand would probably ever
" have been married, had I let my pen
" reſt in my ink-horn. And ſuppoſing
" that out of this fifty thouſand, five hun-
" dred ſhould, by the publication of my
" book, be prevented from getting huſ-
" bands; (I ſay only five hundred, for I

" would

" would not be too ſanguine in my ex-
" pectations of the ſucceſs of my endea-
" vours) and admitting that out of this
" five hundred, not above three individual
" women would have made good wives,
" then it follows, that I ſhall ſacrifice about
" two millions of women, for the chance
" of doing ſome ſervice to not more than
" four hundred and ninety-ſeven men:
" however, notwithſtanding this mon-
" ſtrous diſproportion betwixt the evil and
" the good that I may do, I am too wiſe,
" and too learned, and too generous to
" deſiſt from my undertaking."

The above paraphraſe is, I am ſure, juſtly drawn from the text, tho' not expreſſed in the very words of our Author; and I appeal to every one who reads him, whether the language I have made him ſpeak, is not fairly the reſult of what he has advanced in his *folly* and *danger*, &c.

And now, Mr. *Gallipot*, I again addreſs myſelf to you. As I have begun with your title-page, I will proceed, in order, from thence to the end of your book.

After having laid before us your wiſe and generous motives for drawing your pen in the defence of all diſtreſſed batchelors, and other neceſſitous ſingle men; or, in other words, to lower the price of waſte-

paper, by joining with your brethren of *Grubſtreet* to overſtock the market; you very ſagaciouſly inform us, " that mar-
" riage was at firſt deſigned to keep mankind
" in a ſtate of ſobriety and virtue;
" but that in this, as in all other inſtitu-
" tions, capable of being perverted by the
" depravity of man, ſuch corruptions have
" been introduced, that it is now brought
" into diſgrace and contempt, and made
" the ſubject of ridicule amongſt people
" of all ranks and of both ſexes; ſuch
" only excepted, who have wiſdom enough
" to ſeparate the thing itſelf from the
" abuſes which are crept into it."

Pray, Mr. *Gallipot*, who informed you that marriage is now brought into ſuch diſgrace and contempt, and made the ſubject of ſo much ridicule? To be plain with you, I am afraid that you know but very little of the world, at leaſt have but ſmall acquaintance with the ſober and better part of its inhabitants; amongſt whom I never heard that marriage was in the leaſt diſgrace, or treated with even the ſmalleſt degree of contempt. Some few, perhaps, of the moſt abandoned libertines, and the loweſt dregs of mankind, profligate fellows whom no ſober woman will marry, nor ſober man of any claſs, eſpecially a gentleman,

gentleman, will keep company with, wretches who ſquander away their lives and fortunes in riot and debauchery; ſuch as theſe indeed, may ſometimes try to exerciſe their crazy brains, and muddy wits, in ridiculing every thing ſacred and ſober: but, except ſuch as theſe, I dare affirm, that not one man in a thouſand, nor one woman in ten thouſand, ever looks on matrimony in any other light, than as the moſt deſirable, the moſt reſpected kind of commerce betwixt the ſexes, and the happieſt ſocial ſtate ever yet inſtituted or thought of in this world.——You have, 'tis true, excepted the wiſe ſort, but then you have mentioned them in ſuch a manner, as tho' they were far from being the majority; and 'tis plain you thought ſo, for you would not have placed the others in ſo formidable a light, had you not conſidered *them* as the majority, and the wiſer ſort, only as the diſcerning few, an inconſiderable exception to the generality. Hence it appears what ſort of company you keep, and of what claſs of people your acquaintance are compoſed. And from hence it follows, that what you think, and what you can ſay on this ſubject, is beneath the notice of any but the illiterate and undiſcern-

ing vulgar. —— But let us follow you to your next paragraph.

" Of theſe abuſes and corruptions, ſay " you, (*i. e.* that are crept into the ſtate " of matrimony) the unnatural conjunc- " tion of a young man and an old Wo- " man is certainly the chief; as I ſhall " plainly demonſtrate, by the inconteſti- " ble evidences of examples and facts; " amongſt which my own unhappy caſe " will have no ſmall weight with the un- " prejudiced reader."——A moſt concluſive method this, of determining an abſtracted *Theſis*, by a few ſingular ſtories, or, for ought we know to the contrary, abſolute fictions, or facts miſrepreſented! Little hiſtories or tales told by way of inſtance to illuſtrate any doctrinal point, are no better than ſo many ſimiles, and ſimiles are the moſt dangerous and deluſive methods of argumentation that a bad cauſe ever had recourſe to; becauſe they generally ſpeak to the paſſions, or divert the attention of the by-ſtander, or umpire; and, beſides, they are hardly ever found in all reſpects compatible with the ſubject they are intended to elucidate.

However, before you proceed to favour us with theſe logical, argumentative, demonſtrative,

monſtrative, and melancholly ſtories,* you graciouſly condeſcend to conform ſo far to the vulgar methods of diſputation, as to offer *a few* GENERAL *arguments*, as you call them, *to prove the folly, ſin, and danger of a* young *man's marrying an old Woman, whether maid or Widow; and more eſpecially the great danger of any man's marrying a young Widow.*

Well, now for it, let's ſee what theſe general arguments are, theſe wonderful demonſtrations which are to eſtabliſh the truth of your doctrine beyond all contradiction.——Why truly the ſum and ſubſtance of the whole, may be reduced into ſuch a ſhort abſtract as the following, *viz.* In the firſt place you are very ſure that the reader will grant you a couple of poſtulates; which are to be the fundamental principles of your ſyſtem: *viz.* 1. The belief of God's univerſal providence, and its ſuperintendence over the affairs of men; and ſecondly, that vice and virtue are their own reward, even in this life. Then you tell us, that as good men are favoured and reſpected both by God and man, ſo wicked folks are deſpiſed and hated, not only by their betters, but even by thoſe who are as bad as themſelves. However, you acknow-

* See page 3 of the *folly* and *danger*, &c. Edit. 1.

knowledge that here and there a caſe may happen ſeemingly the reverſe of what you have aſſerted; but that all ſuch, if carefully enquired into, and truly, will, in the end, be found to be only ſtronger proofs in your favour*. Tho', by the way, how ſuch inſtances may be made to appear in your favour, you have not ſo much as put us in a way to gueſs.

Page 6 is taken up in endeavouring to convince us, by dint of downright dogmaticiſm, that if providence hath any hand in the government of the world, and if virtuous and vicious men are at all puniſhed and rewarded in this life, then matrimony, forſooth, lies under the immediate inſpection of providence; and that accordingly as people marry from what you call proper or improper motives, the juſtice of heaven rewards them with proſperity, or puniſhes them with adverſity. Then you proceed to tell us a long ſtory of a cock and a bull, by way of illuſtration, of the ways and means by which young fellows are oftentimes puniſhed for marrying Old Women. This done, you wiſely, tho' ſomewhat abrubtly conclude, "That as a tree is "beſt known by its fruit, ſo the ſinfulneſs "of ſuch *unnatural* conjunctions, (as you "affect

* See pages 4 and 5 of the *folly* and *danger*, &c.

" affect to call them,) is moſt apparently
" diſcovered by their conſequences; and
" that the divine juſtice which never ſuf-
" fers them to proſper, is alone ſufficient
" to demonſtrate, without the help of any
" *verbal* (by which I ſuppoſe you mean
" *logical*) argument; that they are con-
" trary to the ſcheme and conduct of God's
" government of the world."

In page 11 we are informed that a married woman may cuckold her huſband without committing adultery; a moſt ingenious paradox, and which you have moſt admirably ſolved with your uſual dexterity. This pretty conceit you look upon as a clencher; and therefore modeſtly ſit down content with what you have ſaid concerning young mens marrying old Women in general, and ſo proceed to attack the Widows: but, before we follow you any farther, let us ſtop a moment to look back on the foregoing abſtract of your general arguments.

Pray, Mr. *Gallipot*, are you really ſerious, or is all you have ſaid about providence, and virtue, and vice, and matrimony, and young fellows, and old Women, intended for merriment? if the firſt, I muſt ſincerely tell you, that you are very crazy, and exceſſively fooliſh: if the latter,

you

you are monſtrous ſtupid, and equally ſilly! If this pamphlet ſhould fall into any one's hands, who has not read the *folly* and *danger*, ſuch a perſon will doubtleſs imagine I have miſrepreſented yours. Wherefore I earneſtly deſire ſuch a perſon, if he thinks the controverſy worthy his attention, to conſult the original paſſages, as I found them, in the firſt edition of your pamphlet, printed for *J. Robinſon:* Surely never before was ſuch an hodge-podge medley of ſuppoſitions, dogmatick aſſertions, unconſequential concluſions, and rambling conjectures, tagged together, and offered to the publick, as a regular ſeries of rational argumentation. In ſhort, the whole is paſt my comprehenſion, and I ſubmit it to the more diſcerning reader, whether it is not alſo as much beneath the cenſure of a critick, as it would be beyond the power of his patience thoroughly to examine it.

With regard to the Widows, you undertake to prove, "the danger to which "men are expoſed, by entering into ma-"trimony with them, and, conſequently, "the folly of ſuch a junction, eſpecially "on the part of the man." And in order to this, you proceed as follows.

"Man

" Man is naturally tenacious of the rights of " the marriage-bed, and that another ſhould " ſhare thoſe rights with him, is what he can- " not bear the thoughts of. And ſo far hath " this natural delicacy the aſcendant over the " heart and reaſon of man, that he loſes half " his reliſh for the enjoyment of ſuch rights " in the perſon of a Widow, by the reflection " of their having been heretofore poſſeſſed by " another. And though a Widow ſhould pre- " ſerve her fidelity to a ſecond huſband ever " ſo religiouſly, yet ſtill the man will never " have that tender affection for her which he " might have had, if ſhe had never before " been married. He that weds a relict, con- " ſiders her but as a relict, a ſecond-hand com- " modity, and certainly, in ſome reſpects, " worſe for the wear: and, indeed, it would " be highly abſurd for any one to ſet ſo great " a value upon any ſecond-hand piece of " houſhold furniture, as he would if it were " new; becauſe he knows not how it may " have been uſed; nor what ſecret cracks, " flaws, or ſtains it may have received from " the careleſneſs and ill uſage of the former " poſſeſſor."

That man is naturally tenacious of the rights of the marriage-bed, I ſuppoſe no body doubts; but that his delicacy in this point ſhould make him loſe half his reliſh for the enjoyment of ſuch rights in the perſon of a wife who has been a widow, is what I neither underſtand nor believe. If I may be allowed to uſe your method, Mr. *Gallipot*, of demonſtrating a *Theſis*, that is, by telling a ſtory or two of *Geoffry* and

Suſan, and *Randle* and *Bridget*, I can eaſily make it appear, by the authority of my own experience, added to a common received notion, that huſbands are generally more fond of their ſecond wives, than of their firſt; and ſecond wives are commonly choſen from among the Widows, or Old Women in general.

For my own part, I, who am now a Widow, and, tho' I have already had two huſbands, do ſtill hope, and confidently expect to be married again; for my own part, I ſay, I met with more love and tenderneſs, and far better uſage from my ſecond huſband, than from my firſt: and, yet the firſt married me purely for love, I having nothing but my perſonal accompliſhments, which he thought conſiderable, for my portion. Perhaps you, Mr. *Gallipot*, may think this a ſingular caſe; but if you think ſo, you are groſly miſtaken: however, that is not to be wondered at, conſidering your ignorance of the world. Many ſuch inſtances have occurred within the circle of my acquaintance, and the general knowledge I have of the world. That my ſecond huſband ſhould be fonder of me than my firſt, may be accounted for as follows; and I doubt not but the ſame reaſoning may be juſtly applied to many others.

In the days of my youth I had many little failings, which time alone, and my long experience of their ill effects, could rid me of. The ſallies of youth are ſeldom reſtrained, till its heat and vivacity are cooled and allayed by the encroachments of age, and the correcting hand of experience. My firſt huſband had a very conſiderable poſt under the crown, the duties of which

which took up much of his time and thoughts. Buſineſs is ever a foe to love: that, and the little female failings which he had now time to diſcover in me, began inſenſibly to cool the ardor of his love, and at length, when he found that ſhe whom, before matrimony had opened his eyes, he had taken for a goddeſs, was no more than a frail mortal; and reflecting alſo that I brought him nothing but my perſon, he conſidered himſelf as no gainer by the bargain. Hence, tho' I never deſerved his averſion, nor did he ever expreſs the leaſt averſion towards me, yet his behaviour ſufficiently declared, that he did not regard me with ſo much tenderneſs and ardency of love, as before our marriage. Indeed he carried it towards me with all imaginable politeneſs and humanity; but at the ſame time I could eaſily perceive, that it was a matter quite indifferent to him, whether I were alive or dead: for, as it did not appear to him that I abſolutely merited his love, ſo he very well knew that I was not bad enough to deſerve his hatred.

In the thirty-ſixth year of my age, my firſt huſband departed this life. The experience I had of his indifference, added to the natural decline of my levity, to which I was conſcious his indifference were partly owing, ſtrongly induced me to a thorough reformation of manners, in order to merit a better fate, in caſe providence ſhould provide me a ſecond. Exceſſive gaming, and an extravagance in dreſs, together with a little too much obſtinacy in opinion, and no ſmall propenſity to vociferation, were my grand failings. Of theſe I di-

veſted myſelf by degrees, at leaſt the two firſt intirely, and the others as much as poſſible.

In the firſt year of my Widowhood, I received the addreſſes of a gentleman of worth and rank, who honeſtly declared his intentions in words to the following effect. "Madam, "You appear to me an agreeable lady; ſuch "an one as I ſhould think myſelf happy in as "a wife. Sir *H* —— *y*, your late huſband, "has left you ſuch a fortune as may juſtly entitle you to a gentleman of rank and fortune, if you are diſpoſed to enter the matrimonial ſtate a ſecond time. If therefore, "madam, you have no objection to my perſon, as I flatter myſelf you can have none "to my fortune and family, I ſhall think it "my greateſt happineſs, and hope it might "prove to be yours alſo, that we ſhould paſs "the remainder of our lives together. - I have "already been married meerly to pleaſe my "relations, and tho' my wife and I were never "fond of each other, as we were hardly acquainted before we came together, yet (pardon "madam the occaſion that obliges me to ſay "it) ſuch was the eaſineſs and generoſity of "my temper, and ſuch was the happineſs of "hers, that we lived very amicably together, "and when ſhe died, I ſincerely regretted the "loſs of her.—If then, madam, I could live "ſo comfortably with a wife of other peoples "chuſing, how much greater ſatisfaction may "I expect in one of my own chuſing?"

The honeſt appearance of this ſpeech took with me, and I conſented to the worthy ſpeaker's propoſal. We came together with no more than

than a mutual eſteem, founded on the good opinion we had of each other; but this temperate kind of affection ſoon ripened into all the warmth of love. Inſtead of my former follies, I was now ambitious only of copying the many excellencies I daily diſcovered in my new huſband. I am naturally of a grateful diſpoſition, and his generoſity, tenderneſs, and indulgence, wrought ſo powerfully on me, that I thought I could never make him ſufficient returns of the like nature. Hence all the ſtrife that ever happened betwixt us, was which of us ſhould moſt oblige the other — I dare ſay, Mr. *Gallipot*, that my ſecond huſband never "conſidered me "as a relict, a ſecond-hand commodity, or in "any reſpect worſe for the wear"; on the contrary, he very well knew that I had been greatly reformed and improved ſince my firſt marriage; and that, to uſe your delicate phraſe, I was poliſhed, ſeaſoned, tried, and, in many reſpects, much *the better for the wear:* Neither do I believe he ever troubled his head about what *ſecret cracks, flaws, or ſtains, I might have received from the careleſneſs or ill uſage of the former poſſeſſor.*

I ſhall paſs over your coarſe and vulgar parallel betwixt purchaſing horſes, and courting Widows, together with your ſilly ſhadow of a witticiſm upon King *Solomon*'s knowledge of women, for both are as much beneath my notice, as they would have been beneath the pen of a gentleman: but I cannot help taking notice of the following admirable paſſage, in your fourteenth page. *Viz.*

"Of

" Of all the variety of female diſguiſes, the " wiles of the Widow are the moſt intricate. " Her deep diſſimulation, her artful appear- " ances, are by far an over-match for all the " wiſdom and policy of man; who may as " well pretend to fathom and diſcern the depth " and bottom of the ocean, as to form a right " judgment of the true character of a Widow". — In anſwer to this I ſhall only obſerve, that you know nothing of the matter; and that what you impute to the Widows, may, with equal juſtice be applied to the Maids; and therefore, as your charge bears equally hard upon all women, conſequently it tends to the ſubverſion of matrimony itſelf: for, if the men are perſuaded to conſider the ſex in general, in the odious light you place them in, marriage will inevitably fall into diſrepute, and then fornication, or crimes of even a more deteſtable nature muſt take place.

Next to the paſſage quoted above, follows your ſtory of *Dramanthe* and her two huſbands; at the cloſe of which you charitably aſſert, " that almoſt every *Engliſh* Widow, in " ſome degree, reſembles *Dramanthe:*" who, it ſeems, was guilty of no leſs crimes than drunkenneſs and adultery, the firſt of which brought her to an untimely and ſhameful end! but, as if you were aſhamed of the invidious falſhood of the charge, you immediately draw in your horns, acknowledging, " that perhaps " not above one in fifty are chargeable with " ſuch monſtrous vices." But if ſo, why then did you glance this poiſoned dart at them at all?—'Tis plain, Mr. *Gallipot*, 'tis plainly the

rancour

rancour and malice of your heart, and the abominable wickedneſs of your diſpoſition, that prompted you to draw the lying inference. You were certainly conſcious of your guilt in this inſtance, or elſe why did you thus endeavour to ſoften the vile inſinuation? 'tis pity that the faint ray of modeſty which then ſeems to have broke in upon you, could not guide your pen to blot out the whole paſſage. But indeed that would have ruined your grand deſign, which was to ſcandalize and calumniate, without the leaſt regard to truth and decency. You thought, I ſuppoſe, that the very ſhadow of a compariſon betwixt *Dramanthe* and the Widows in general, would caſt a ſufficient odium on the whole claſs; and that the oblique aſperſion at the beginning of the paragraph, would naturally buoy up over the ſurface of the ſubſequent extenuation of the ſcandal, and engage the reader's attention and credulity, whilſt your cloudy retreat would ſcarce be obſerved. And thus you wiſely imagined that, notwithſtanding your ambiguous and ſneaking recantation, the poiſonous doſe of calumny might operate ſucceſsfully with the unwary reader, whilſt at the ſame time you as vainly flatter'd yourſelf with having provided an antidote, in caſe his reſentment ſhould compel you to eat your own words. Thus, after having wickedly and falſly compared almoſt every *Engliſh* Widow to *Dramanthe*, "you can only "venture to affirm, that moſt of them are de- "generated from the virtuous ſimplicity and "innocence of their virgin ſtate." This, you tell us, may be derived from ſeveral cauſes,

of

of which you exhibit three as the chief.—— Of theſe three here follow the heads.

I. " A virgin beſtows all her love upon her " firſt huſband, and conſequently if ſhe lives " to have a ſecond, will have none left for " him: from whence you judiciouſly infer, " that he will have none for her."

II. " A Widow may have been ſpoiled by " the too great fondneſs of her firſt huſband, " and therefore muſt be unfit for a ſecond; " becauſe, as he may not be equally fond of " her, ſo he will not equally indulge her: con- " ſequently ſtrife and unhappineſs muſt enſue."

III. " During the life of her firſt huſband, " and ſince his death, ſhe may have contracted " ſuch acquaintance with other good wives, " *&c.* as may very much viciate her conver- " ſation and manners." And here you have taken upon you to enumerate a great many ways, and means, and kinds of corruption and immorality, which you aſſert as current amongſt the married Women and Widows, concluding all as follows.

" Theſe are the principal cauſes of the de- " generacy of the Widow, from that purity " of manners, thoſe virtues and graces, which " men ſo much admire in the Maid; and from " theſe conſiderations it is that I would inſpire " my young countrymen with ſo juſt a ſenſe of " their liberty and real happineſs, as not to " think riches and grandeur worth their ac- " ceptance, if neceſſarily clogg'd with the in- " cumbrance of a Widow." With a great deal more of ſuch ſtuff, which I ſhall not take the pains to tranſcribe.

To

To all this I reply. 1. That Widows *are not* degenerated from the virtue and innocence of their virgin ſtate; for tho' their experience of *men* and *things*, may, in a great meaſure have diveſted them of that ſimplicity you mention, yet it does not thence follow that they have laid by their virtue and innocence alſo. But I fancy, Mr. *Gallipot*, that when you talk of female virtue, innocence, and ſimplicity, your Ideas are confined to ſhadows, which you miſtake for the real eſſence of theſe things. Men are very poorly ſkilled in ſuch matters, and, let me tell you, what often paſſeth with them for ſimplicity and innocence in young girls, is no more than the varniſh of nature, and what infallibly wears off and diſappears on the approach of their riper years: yet, nevertheleſs, the true modeſty and virtue ſtill remains perfect and maturated by time and experience; as unripe walnuts which are fit for nothing but to pickle, are more generally valued, and fitter for every body's Uſe, when they fall naturally from the tree, and the green and ſour rind comes eaſily off. Nay, further, I can take upon me to aſſure you, that theſe pretty, ſimple, modeſt innocents the virgins, are as arrant women as the beſt of us, when ſecure from the preſence of the men; and can talk, and tattle, and underſtand what's what, as well as the wives and widows. We are made nearly all alike by nature. A young girl is like the ſeed of a vegetable, which, as naturaliſts tell us, contains, in miniature, all the parts of a perfect mature plant. The girl, like this plant in miniature, which is laid in the earth, and

brought to perfection by the elaſtic heat of the ſun, is affected in the ſame manner by matrimony, the approach of age, or much converſation with women; for theſe only call forth the latent ſprigs, leaves, and fruits, all which are in itſelf, without adding any thing to the original maſs, ſave modes and forms only. Hence it is evident, that he who marries a raw girl, is like a perſon that buys unripe fruit, which he gives himſelf the trouble to bring to perfection, by forced and artificial Heats, rather than ſtay till the ſun and the fulneſs of the ſeaſon have ripen'd it ready to his hands; and, *vice verſa*, he that marries a Widow or elderly Woman, may be compared to one that lays out his money in ripe fruit, which requires no ſuch cookery, and is much more palatable into the bargain. In ſhort, the Maids, inſtead of degenerating from their virtue and innocence, when they come to be Wives and Widows, may with more propriety be ſaid to be then come to themſelves, that is, to be grown into ſuch perfect mature plants as nature intended they ſhould be; and then, and not till then, a man may poſſibly know what ſpecies they are of. All the difference betwixt marrying a Maid and a Widow is this; he that marries a Maid, takes her a little before her metamorphoſis; he that marries a Widow, takes her in the ſhape ſhe is to continue in.

II. In anſwer to your firſt cauſe of the pretended degeneracy of the Widows, I reply, it is a downright falſity, to ſay that "Virgins be-"ſtow all their love upon their firſt Huſbands, "and that they have none left for their Seconds."

"conds." An inſtance of the contrary of this I have already given in my own Perſonal Hiſtory, and could produce many others; but I think it needleſs, for I dare ſay that ninety-nine out of every hundred of your readers, will, of their own accords, diſſent from you in that article.

III. With regard to your ſecond ſuppoſitious cauſe, I have already ſaid enough to expoſe its invalidity. Wives are very rarely ſpoiled by the over-fondneſs of their firſt huſbands; and, as I have alſo juſt now ſhewn, the Widow ſtands a better chance of living happily with her ſecond than ſhe did with her firſt huſband; however, I own this is beſt proved by the evidence of facts, and the experience we have of the world, therefore I ſubmit this matter to the determination of the experienced reader.

IV. As for your third ſuppoſitious cauſe of the Widow's degeneracy, I grant there may be ſomething of weight in it; but then the caſe is confined to a few ſingular inſtances, and even in thoſe the charge may with equal juſtice be brought againſt the Maids: as you, Mr. *Gallipot*, would certainly acknowledge, were you as well acquainted with the whole ſex as I am. But, admitting the evils you complain of were as general as you would make the world believe, yet as all women are in this reſpect almoſt equally criminal, a wiſe man would chuſe to ſay nothing of it, leſt, as I have already obſerv'd, with regard to a paſſage in your fourteenth page, you in any degree ſap the foundations of Matrimony itſelf. I ſhall not, however, quit this head, without

obſerving that you do the whole Sex a great deal of injury in this charge; repreſenting the married Women and Widows as little ſuperior to Captain *Gulliver*'s *Yahoos*, but how juſtly, I will appeal to the judgment of the unprejudic'd reader.

I come now to a moſt glaring inſtance of your ſtupidity, or wickedneſs, or both. In your twenty third page, after taking notice that young Widows are univerſally accuſed of more wantonneſs than other women, you cite the authority of St. *Paul*, whoſe judgment you have ignorantly, or with a nefarious deſign, miſrepreſented, and whoſe words you have falſly tranſcrib'd. In your quotation the Apoſtle ſpeaks thus: *But the younger widows refuſe, for when they have begun to wax wanton, they will marry; having damnation becauſe they have caſt off their firſt faith.* Now from this caſtrated text, you have (by way of note, referred to from the word *Faith*) ſhamefully trumped up the following query, *viz.* "Whe-"ther the Apoſtle does not mean their *Faith* "to their firſt huſband? if ſo, then the con-"text plainly intimates, that a Chriſtian Wi-"dow is never to marry a ſecond time."

I confeſs, if it had not been for this monſtrous note, the foregoing falſe quotation might poſſibly have impoſed on the ſhortneſs of my memory, and have eſcaped undetected. But the ſtrange query putting me upon conſulting the Bible, how was I moved with aſtoniſhment and indignation to find that you had left out two important words, upon which the right underſtanding of the whole quotation depend-

ed?

ed? In the Scripture St. *Paul* ſpeaks thus: "For when they have begun to wax wanton "*againſt* CHRIST, they will marry; having "damnation, becauſe they have caſt off their "*firſt faith*;" that is, their *faith* in Chriſt! Now by leaving the Words *againſt* CHRIST out of your quotation, you have miſrepreſented the Apoſtle's meaning in ſuch a manner, as every other human creature would have ſcorned to do; but as for you, I do not expect that you will be aſhamed of it; for a man that is capable of ſuch a thing, muſt be ſteeled and harden'd againſt all fear or ſenſe of ſhame. As for your query, you would be guilty of no more abſurdity, had you ſubſtituted the following in its place, *viz. Whether the Apoſtle does not mean, that King* Charles I. *loſt his* head *by taking Mrs.* Stephens's *Medicine for the* ſtone; *and, if ſo, then the context plainly intimates, that a King of* England *ſhould never learn the* art *of* Ribband-weaving.

And now, Mr. *Gallipot*, I think I have ſufficiently expoſed both you and your Pamphlet. As for the ſtories which fill up the nine laſt pages of it, particularly your own hiſtory, I think it unneceſſary to beſtow any animadverſions on them. What I have ſaid is ſufficient to ſap the credit of every thing that comes from your pen: What I have written is intended as an antidote againſt its poiſon, and I hope it will prove effectual. The defence of the Aged and Widow induced me to take up the cudgels againſt you, and ſurely every good man will rejoice, that I have thus fairly reſcued them out of your Paws, and broke your head

head into the bargain. Were I a man, and animated with the ſame generous reſentment, which, as a woman, has now ſpirited me into the field againſt you, I ſhould chuſe to correct your inſolence with another gueſs Weapon than a pen; tho' indeed I ſuppoſe you take ſufficient care to conceal yourſelf; for doubtleſs you muſt be too conſcious of the blackneſs of the cauſe you are engaged in, to appear in publick in that character, which you yourſelf have burleſqu'd with the Denomination of the True Penitent.

FINIS.